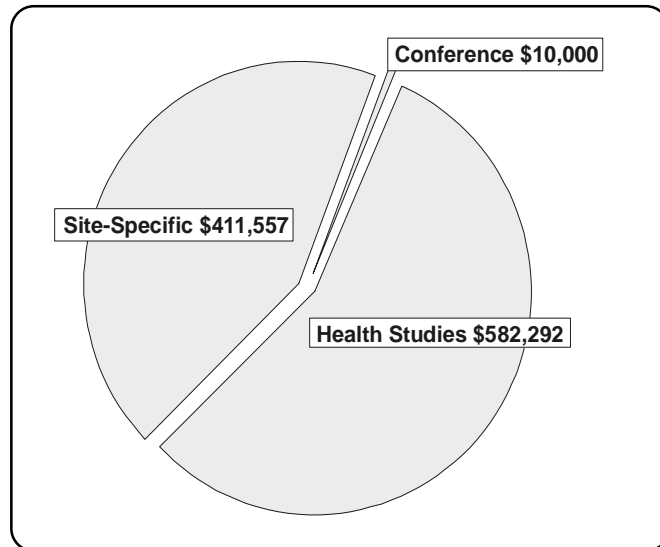


Activities in Utah

ATSDR in Partnership with Utah

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is the lead public health agency responsible for implementing the health-related provisions of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA). ATSDR is an Atlanta-based federal agency with more than 400 employees. ATSDR's annual budget for 2002 is \$78 million. ATSDR is responsible for assessing the presence and nature of health hazards at specific Superfund sites, helping to prevent or reduce further exposure and illnesses that result, and expanding the knowledge base about the health effects of exposure to hazardous substances.

ATSDR works closely with state agencies to carry out its mission of preventing exposure to contaminants at hazardous waste sites and preventing adverse health effects. ATSDR provides funding and technical assistance for states to identify and evaluate environmental health threats to communities. These resources enable state and local health departments to further investigate environmental health concerns and educate communities. This is accomplished through cooperative agreements and grants. At this time, ATSDR has cooperative agreements and grants with 31 states, 1 American Indian nation (Gila River Indian Community), and 1 commonwealth (Puerto Rico Department of Health). From **1990 through 2001**, ATSDR awarded more than **\$1,003,849** in direct funds and services to the state of **Utah**. In addition to direct funds and services, ATSDR staff provides technical and administrative guidance for state-conducted site activities.



ATSDR Site-Specific Activities

Public Health Assessment-Related Activities

One of the agency's important mandates is to conduct **public health assessments** of all National Priorities List (NPL) sites and of other sites where there might be a significant threat to the public health. There have been **23** sites designated to the NPL in **Utah**.

A **public health assessment** provides a written, comprehensive evaluation of available data and information on the release of hazardous substances into the environment in a specific geographic area. Such releases are assessed for current or future impact on public health. ATSDR staff, in conjunction with public health and environmental officials from **Utah**, has conducted **25** health assessments in the state.

A **health consultation** is a written or oral response from ATSDR to a specific request for information about health risks related to a specific site, chemical release, or hazardous material. It is a more limited response than a public health assessment. To date, **18** documented health consultations have been conducted at **14** sites in **Utah**.

Educating Health Professionals and Community Activities

Another aspect of the cooperative agreement program includes the support of educational activities for physicians and other health professionals and communities concerning human exposure to hazardous substances in the environment.

Additionally, ATSDR awarded a cooperative agreement to the **National Association of County Health Officials (NACHO)** to develop short courses to educate health professionals about the surveillance, diagnosis, and treatment of persons potentially exposed to hazardous substances in **Utah**. As part of the cooperative agreement, NACHO developed and implemented short course instructional sessions and supporting materials on surveillance, screening, and methods of diagnosis and treatment of injury or disease related to exposure to hazardous materials. In conjunction with this educational collaboration, a meeting was held concerning **Managing and Preventing Environmental Health Controversy** and two meetings were held concerning **Addressing Childhood Lead Poisoning**, in the state.

Public Health Conference Support Grants

ATSDR awards grants to state and local agencies to support public health conferences that encourage information sharing, technical discussion, and other training activities related to acute illness and chronic disease relating to hazardous substances exposures. The following conferences have been conducted in **Utah**: the **Environmental Epidemiology & Risk Assessment Conference** and the **Statistical Methods for Studying Disease Space-Time Clusters Conference**.

The Epidemiology & Risk Assessment Conference was held in September 1991 at the **University of Utah** as part of the regular credit course curriculum. Seventeen individuals participated in the course, which included the pilot testing of several chapters of a textbook by the same title being written by the faculty. The Space-Time Cluster Conference was held in conjunction with the 1991 annual meeting of the **Society of Epidemiology Research** in Buffalo, New York. Fifteen individuals participated in this conference that was designed to build on basic epidemiology and biostatistical training. This training included introduction of a software package to analyze data from reports of increased adverse health events (both cancer and birth defects), which often are reported at settings of suspected environmental contamination.

Health Studies

Health studies are conducted to determine the relationship between exposures to hazardous substances and adverse health effects. Health studies also define those health problems that require further inquiry through, for example, a health surveillance or epidemiological study. The following health studies have been conducted or supported by ATSDR in **Utah**:

Silver Creek Mine Tailings Exposure - ATSDR provided technical assistance to the **Utah Department of Health (DOH)** to conduct a health effects study at this site. There was no evidence of excessive exposure to lead, arsenic, or cadmium at clinically meaningful levels. Although blood-lead levels were higher in the target than in the comparison area, the differing values were within the normal range. The final report became available in June 1988.

Hazardous Substances Emergency Events Surveillance System (HSEES) - The Hazardous Substances Emergency Events Surveillance System (HSEES) was established by ATSDR in 1990 to collect and analyze information about releases of hazardous substances that need to be cleaned up or neutralized according to federal, state, or local law, as well as threatened releases that result in a public health action, such as an evacuation.

The goal of HSEES is to reduce the morbidity and mortality experienced by first responders, employees, and the general public resulting from hazardous substances emergencies. A total of 16 state health departments were awarded cooperative agreements (Alabama, Colorado, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, **Utah**, Washington, and Wisconsin). HSEES captures data on more than 5,000 events annually. Of these, 80% occur at fixed facilities, and 20% are transportation-related events. Most events occur Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Persons most often injured are employees. The HSEES system is used to generate information for use by states to conduct the following activities: (1) presentations to industries (such as agriculture) that account for a significant number of spills, to help plan prevention strategies, (2) HazMat training courses, including data on the risk of injury from methamphetamine labs, (3) establish and maintain protection areas for municipal water systems, (4) assist with the proper placement of HazMat teams, (5) develop fact sheets on frequently spilled chemicals or chemicals that cause a disproportionate number of injuries (such as chlorine and ammonia), (6) develop newsletters to industry and responder and environmental groups, and (7) presentations for state and local emergency planners.

Exposure to Tremolite Asbestos in Vermiculite Ore – Utah was awarded funding in 2001 to conduct a statistical review of state cancer registry data and analyze existing health outcome data of select asbestos-related diseases, such as mesothelioma. Exposures to tremolite asbestos have occurred among people working at, living near, and otherwise in contact with, vermiculite mined and processed in Libby, Montana. Exposures have also occurred at facilities that processed vermiculite ore from Libby and at other vermiculite mining and processing facilities, such as Intermountain Insulation in Salt Lake City, in the United States.

Analysis of Childhood Asthma and Hazardous Sites - This project will examine the relationship of childhood asthma in four urban counties (Weber, Davis, Salt Lake and Utah) to the proximity of hazardous waste sites and other industrial sources. The purpose of this project is to identify and quantify environmental hazards and evaluate the spatial and temporal relationships between childhood asthma and environmental exposures in **Utah**. Funding for this 3-year grant was initially awarded in 1999 and completion is expected in 2002.

Toxicological Profiles

ATSDR develops **toxicological profiles** that describe health effects, environmental characteristics, and other information for substances found at NPL sites. These profiles contain information on pathways of human exposure and the behavior of hazardous substances in environmental media such as air, soil, and water. In the past 4 years, several of these profiles have been sent to requesters, including representatives of federal, state, and local health and environmental departments; academic institutions; private industries; and nonprofit organizations in the state of **Utah**.

If you would like additional information, contact ATSDR toll-free at (888) 42ATSDR, that is, (888) 422-8737 or visit the homepage at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov>

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AGENCY FOR TOXIC SUBSTANCES
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